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ABSTRACT

This symposium included four papers about the administration of the evaluation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I projects. The first speaker, Janice K. Anderson, presented a summary of efforts to coordinate evaluations so as to promote sufficient uniformity for generalizations across local programs, but permitting maximim local initiative. Ronald L. Fishbein described the process by which eight regional Technical Assistance Centers were set up, and how they established relationships with the state and local education agencies, and provided the services that were requested. The third paper, by David L. Donovan and Daniel E. Schooley, suggested that state education agencies did not have sufficient influence in planning Title I programs. The authors suggested a national testing program or a program similar to the Michigan Educational Assessment Test or the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The last speaker, Carl Novak, supported the use of Normal Curve Equivalency Scores, and spoke of the valuable assistance provided by the technical assistance centers. (Author/CTM)

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USOE'S TITLE I EVALUATION MODEL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS: A SYMPOSIUM PRESENT AT THE 1977 ANNUAL MEETING OF A-E-R-A.

Judith C. Burnes
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Symposium

USOE's Title I Evaluation Technical Assistance Efforts Background and the Evaluation System*

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and Evaluation

*Paper presented at the 1977 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, New York, April 1977(Symposium 7.08)

"The Committee repeats its view that the Office of Education has not assumed the leadership it should have concerning evaluation activities under Title I. ...The Committee urges OE to correct this failing." (Subcommittee on Education, 1974). Such were the feelings of the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives in hearings that preceded passage of the Education Amendments of 1974. Those feelings are also reflected in an amendment by that legislation to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In that amendment, a Section 151 was added to Title I and has influenced greatly the evaluation efforts of the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation (OPBE) of the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) for the past two years. The purpose of this paper is to describe those developmental efforts and some of their products.

Background

Title I of ESEA states that the policy of the United States will be "to provide financial assistance ... to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means ... which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children" (ESEA, Title I, Section 101, "Declaration of Policy"). In the years since its enactment, the annual appropriations have grown from $959 million to over $2 billion, and the funds have been used in increasing proportions to provide remedial services in the basic skills (reading and math, primarily) to low-achieving students (Wargo, Tallmadge, Michaels, Lipe, and Morris, 1972; Trismen, Waller, and Wilder, 1976; NIE, 1976).

Evaluation of the impacts of Title I services is required at all three programmatic levels: local, State, and federal. As stated in Section 141(a)(6) of Title I, a local educational agency must assure its State "That effective

procedures, including provisions for appropriate objective measurements of educational achievement, will be adopted for evaluating at least annually the effectiveness of the programs in meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children." Similarly, a State must assure the U.S. Commissioner of Education "that the State educational agency will make ... periodic reports (including the results of objective measurements required by Section 141(a)(6) ...) evaluating the effectiveness of payments under this title and of particular programs assisted under it in improving the educational attainment of educationally deprived children ..." (ESEA, Title I, Section 142(a)(3)). The Commissioner of Education is required by the General Education Provisions Act (Section 417(a)(1)) to report to Congress annually on the effectiveness of all educational programs in achieving their legislated goals.

Attempts at the federal level to use data from the State annual evaluation reports to satisfy this last reporting requirement have been frustrated by the lack of comparability --- and often of validity --- of the data in them. Both USOE and the Committee cited above recognized these problems, and in August of 1974, Congress amended Title I with the addition of Section 151 as mentioned earlier. It lists specific activities required of the Commissioner. The subsections of Section 151 can be summarized as follows:

"The Commissioner shall

(a) provide for independent evaluations which describe and measure the impact of programs and projects assisted under this title ...

(b) develop and publish standards for evaluation of program or project effectiveness ...

(c) where appropriate, consult with State agencies in order to provide for jointly sponsored objective evaluation studies ...

(d) provide to State educational agencies, models for evaluations

of all programs conducted under this title ... which shall include uniform procedures and criteria to be utilized by local educational agencies, as well as by the State agency.

(e) provide such technical and other assistance as may be necessary to State educational agencies to enable them to assist local educational agencies in the development and application of a systematic evaluation of programs in accordance with the models developed by the Commissioner.

(f) develop a system for the gathering and dissemination of results of evaluations and for the identification of exemplary programs.

Subsection (f) of Section 151 describes the models further as specifying "objective criteria" and outlining techniques and methodology" for producing data which are comparable on a statewide and nationwide basis." Subsection (g) requires a periodic report on the activities of this Section.

Overview of USOE's Implementation of Section 151

As you can see, those requirements outline a comprehensive, complete evaluation program: conduct evaluations, upgrade evaluation activities at other administrative levels so that reported data are comparable, use those data to ---among other things---identify especially effective instructional practices, and disseminate information about those practices. The evaluation program outlined is complete in that the steps in the legislation require that the feedback loop be closed: that is, they specify that the information from evaluation findings must be disseminated and then presumably used to refine program operations.

Another observation about the legislation is that complementary activities are required. The Section 151 evaluation program requires and is strengthened by its reliance on two mutually dependent but different strategies. One is the use of data compiled and reported upward from the local and State agencies to

USOE. Those data will provide an information base which has the qualities of recency (because the data are reported annually) and of breadth (because most if not all of the Title I projects in the nation will be reporting).

The second strategy stated in the Section is the use of Federal studies to measure the impact of the program nationally. The information base generated through this strategy has the qualities of efficiency (data are collected only on a sample of sites nationwide) and of depth (more data can be collected in each of those sites, beyond that possible through self-reports). Each strategy also has its weaknesses: quality control in the reporting system, and infrequency with the national studies. Together, however, the two strategies can adequately and efficiently provide answers to most administrators' questions.

A third observation about the legislation is that it presents a real challenge to federal, State, and local Title I administrators and evaluators. It calls for a mutual effort to document their programs' operations and impacts and highlights specific approaches for facilitating such an accomplishment. Those approaches are consultation among the parties at all administrative levels, the use of models as a structure for generating comparable data, and the provision of technical and other assistance in support of that structure.

USOE personnel would like to see this mutual effort be one eventually which reaches across all Title I program areas and sites. It will represent a joint commitment by all Title I educators (those in regular schools, in migrant education, in State institutional programs---wherever children are receiving Title I services) and emphasizing basic skills alone or in conjunction with other goal areas such as attitudinal improvement, health, or attendance. The challenge for all of them will be to provide policy-makers at all levels with the information necessary to make important decisions about the program. That day may be quite a few years off, but initial reactions to USOE's work thus far suggest that such an objective is not totally unrealistic.

OPBE's plans call for the development and adoption of evaluation models for the variety of Title I settings in phases. Current implementation efforts are focusing on projects in the basic skills in regular school settings. (Estimates indicate that basic skills programs serve most of the children in Title I.) Developmental work is still underway to address impacts of projects involving institutionalized youth, the children of migrant workers, and pre-school youngsters. We are addressing also the problems of assessing projects' non-instructional services and their activities to improve students' affective development. Results from work in those areas will not be available for some time.

OPBE personnel are also pursuing a program of technical assistance to States to facilitate their work with their school districts to standardize evaluation practices. The program has three components: workshops for State administrators and evaluators, publications, and free consulting services from USOE staff and from Technical Assistance Centers established for this purpose. The Centers provide the most active, direct form of specific assistance and are described in the presentation which follows this one.

The first set of workshops were given the fall of 1976 for three days each in ten locations. The curriculum included detailed presentation of each model, general discussions of typical test and measurement issues, sessions on the interpretation of findings, and work periods for doing examples. Each participant was given sets of materials and videotapes to help him give the workshops to school district personnel in his State.

The publications series consists of practical handbooks in various areas of evaluation. Two are available from the Government Printing Office: A Practical Guide to Measuring Project Impact on Student Achievement (document 017-080-01460)

and A Procedural Guide for Validating Achievement Gains (document 017-080-01516). They establish a series of decisions to be made in planning and conducting an evaluation or in validating the results of evaluations, respectively. Available almost a year, the first of the series has sold over 8000 copies; the second has sold 3000 in four months.

Others in the series will address the problems of assessing children's affective development, of examining achievement tests for bias, of managing a large-scale testing program, of using criterion-referenced tests, and of estimating standard project costs. They will become available throughout the next year.

USOE's Title I Evaluation and Reporting System

The work to develop some standard models for the local and State evaluation of Title I was begun in June, 1974 after the need for it had been clarified by earlier work (Wargo, et al., 1972). A contract was awarded through federal competitive procedures to RMC Research Corporation of Mountain View, California. That work involved:

(1) interviews with policy-makers in both the Executive Branch and Congress to determine their information needs;

(2) a review of four years' worth of State Annual Evaluation Reports (for FY 71, 72, 73, 74);

(3) a tabulation, as possible, of data about the Title I program;

(4) a determination of the common reporting practices which might be adopted nationwide to serve policy-makers' needs;

(5) the recommendation of some such practices; and

(6) a check on the feasibility of the suggestions with administrators and evaluators in a small sample of states (Gamel, Tallmadge, Wood, and Binkley, 1975).

In June, 1975, this developmental effort was completed, and another award was made to RMC Research through competitive procedures. That project involved visits to all States and territories as well as to three local school districts in each to discuss the prototype system and its implications in those settings (Bessey, Rosen, Chiang, and Tallmadge, 1976).

Throughout both projects two advisory groups have been relied upon for recommendations and feedback. One panel, the Policy Advisory Group, consisted of State Title I program administrators, State evaluators, local program administrators, local evaluators, parents, and representatives from both the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The second panel, the Research Advisory Group, included nationally recognized experts in the areas of evaluation and assessment methodology, measurement, and criterion-referenced tests. Both panels have reacted to plans, suggested changes, and provided advice through all phases of the work. Such input has also been solicited from State and local administrators during the site visits.

The main features of the currently proposed evaluation system are shown on Table I. As you see, the system distributes responsibilities across all program levels and allows flexibility in choice of comparison group and type of test instrument used.

The Models

Those choices are structured by the system to fall among three evaluation models which can incorporate data from achievement tests with or without national norms. Each model compares the growth of the Title I project children to that of a different group of children: (a) in one case, that comparison group is the children in a test publisher's norming sample who scored the same on the pretest as the project participants (hence, the model is called "Norm-referenced); (b) a

Table 1 Summary of the Main Features of the Title I Evaluation System

Features of model designed for regular district programs stressing
- basic skills information reported on test scores, cost, numbers of participants, hours per week of instruction, parent activities, and teacher training
- LEAs/SEAs have choice of three evaluation models
- LEAs/SEAs have choice of basic skill tests (including criterion-referenced)
- test scores are converted to a common scale so that results can be compared and aggregated
- detailed but relatively simple procedures and formats are prescribed for LEAs/SEAs to use in reporting results

Timing
- proposed rules in fall, 1977
- technical training of SEAs in fall of 1976 and continuing
- final regulations in early spring of 1978
- LEAs first implement models in school year 1979-80.
- first use of data in SEA reports to OE in winter, 1981

Responsibilities

LEAs
- choose evaluation model and test instrument
- purchase tests and arrange for testing and other data collection
- insure that correct data gathering procedures are followed:
  e.g., tests are administered at correct time and under correct and uniform conditions; all appropriate children are tested
- score tests or have them scored
- report results to SEA in appropriate format

SEAs
- provide technical assistance to LEAs directly or through Technical Assistance Centers
- verify accuracy of LEA reports
- aggregate data and report results to OE

OE
- develop and modify models as necessary
- issue regulations
- publish technical assistance materials
- provide technical assistance to SEAs, directly or through Technical Assistance Centers
- verify accuracy of SEA reports
- aggregate data and report results to Congress

second alternative is the use of a local comparison group of children who are like Title I participants but who receive no compensatory services (the "Control---or Comparison---Group" model); (c) a third possibility is the use of a local group of children who are not like the Title I participants in that they all scored higher on a "pretest" (the "Regression Approach"). There will also be provisions for the approval of the use of alternative models and variations as long as each satisfies general technical standards of the system and generate comparable data.

Hence, all models used will have at least two things in common: the necessity of (1) pretest and posttest information about Title I participants and (2) that same information about a comparison group for estimating a "baseline" for the Title I children's growth without a project. That second necessity is the one which will impose the most constraints on evaluation practices. For example, if a project chooses to use Model A, the norm-referenced approach, it will be relying on a publisher's norm group for the "baseline" and will need the same pretest - posttest information on project participants as the test has for its norming sample. That is, if test scores are available for October and May for the norming sample, that is when they must be collected from the project children. Hence, a major implementation consideration with Model A is adherence to a schedule in which pre-and posttests correspond to the norm dates of the test.

Reliance on a local group of children similar to those in the Title I project for answering the second question above removes the test schedule constraint but necessitates others regarding the similarity of the two groups of children and the withholding of compensatory services from the comparison group of supposedly equally needy children. The use of random assignment to project and "control" conditions is not possible since it is the intent of the

program to serve the neediest children. Hence, data from a "comparison" group of similar, but not equivalent, children are used and statistical adjustments eliminate as much as possible alternative hypotheses that rival exposure to Title I to explain the project group's differential improvement.

Reliance on a local group of children completely dissimilar from the project participants avoids the timing and withholding-of-services constraints but introduces considerations regarding the statistical assumptions of regression analysis. For example, because a regression line to predict posttest scores based on a distribution of pretest ones is used to estimate the project children's performance without a project, that line must be based on a sufficient number of children to be adequately stable and accurate.

Despite the various constraints necessary to make each model valid, the provision of three alternative approaches -- each accommodating various types of test scores -- will make the system usable in most situations. As exceptions arise, however, States can propose an alternative which will then be judged as to its methodological validity and its ability to generate data comparable to that of the regular evaluation system. If it is found to be adequate in both regards, it can then be used instead of one of the three described above.

Reporting Comparable Data

The system is built upon evaluations of project effects at the local level and concentrates on the validity of those estimates. Evaluators are advised to choose the most sensitive test instrument to measure progress in achieving project goals; they are also advised to select the most appropriate basis of comparison for their Title I children such that the estimates of their growth without the project will be as accurate as possible. Since each model, if implemented correctly, will yield an unbiased estimate of a project's effects, aggregating results across models is possible.

The system, then, allows the aggregation of unbiased, project-valid estimates of the effects of Title I services. Those estimates are expressed in one common metric to make such aggregation possible. That scale is one of transformed standard scores having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. These parameters were derived to make this scale of "Normal Curve Equivalents" (NCE's) match the percentile distribution at 1,50, and 99. Figure 1 on the following page shows the relationship between standard deviation units (z scores), stanines, percentiles, and NCE's.

In short, the evaluation system is one of three basic models --- and others as approved --- which can incorporate different types of test scores. It is one which is implemented at the local project level and uses the project as the unit of analysis throughout: that is, project descriptors such as enrollment, cost, hours of exposure and an estimate of average gain are computed and reported to higher administrative levels (local school districts, intermediate districts, State offices, etc. as appropriate in particular settings).

A system of forms and instructions for implementing each model has also been developed. Some States have indicated that they will adopt the forms for collecting the necessary information from their school districts; others will simply modify their current forms, especially in those cases where a consolidated form is used for locals to report on all State or federal programs. States are encouraged to augment the required information with other data necessary for their own administrative activities.

Advantages of the system at the Federal level stem partly from its provision of data necessary for USOE to fulfill its reporting requirements to Congress. Also, the availability of comparable, project-level data at both the State and Federal levels will allow the identification of especially effective educational practices. At the State level, it can also facilitate more efficient monitoring and guidance of local Title I efforts. Advantages of the system to local

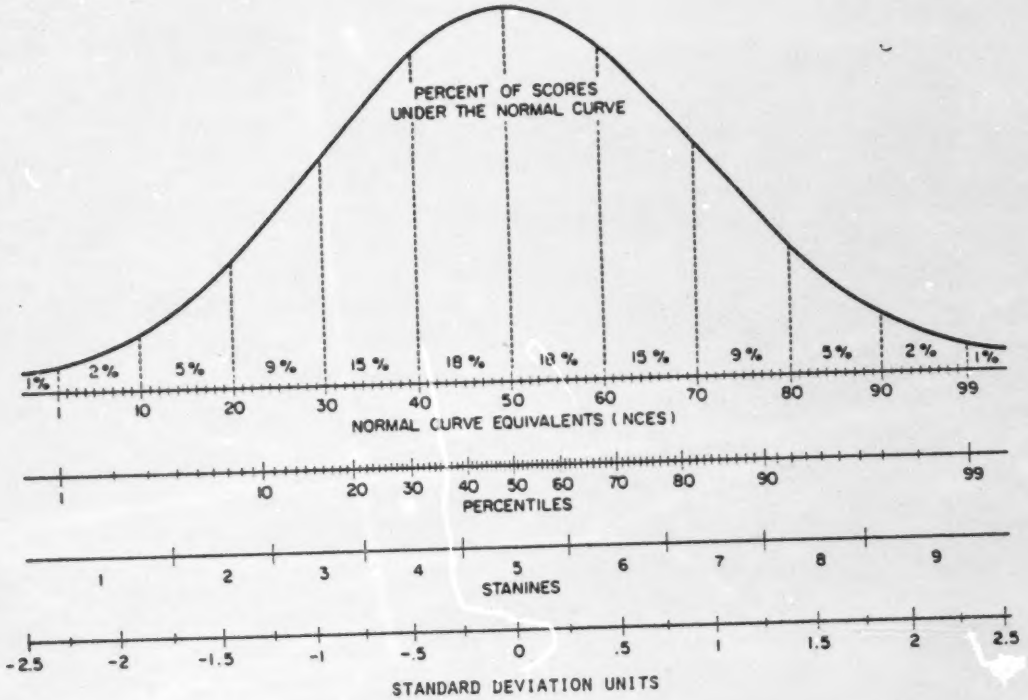

Figure 1. Area under the normal curve divided into NCEs, percentiles, stanines, and standard deviation units.

taken from Tallmadge and Wood
(October, 1976-draft, p. 9)

educators stem from its potential both for improving their evaluation activities and for providing them access to an increasingly useful data base: that on enrollments, services, staffing, and outcomes from Title I projects nationwide. Hence, our hopes for the system are that decision-makers at all levels will find benefits from its use.

Summary

This paper has described a little of the history and development of a Title I evaluation and reporting system to be used nationwide as one of the strategies for assessing the impact of ESEA, Title I. This strategy will operate concurrently with another involving more infrequent, indepth national evaluations of the program and is meant to improve the data base available to local and State administrators as well as that for use at the Federal level.

While no claims are made regarding perfection in the proposed system (and obvious compromises in rigor have been necessary to make it useable by most people), USOE personnel do feel that in most cases it will guide judgments of administrators and evaluators in ways likely to provide them with useful information. The system has been subjected to considerable examination and debate and has benefitted from that scrutiny. Those involved assume and hope that such a dialogue will continue, and we welcome constructive comment.

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USOE's Title I Evaluation Technical Assistance Efforts
The Technical Assistance Centers*

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*Paper presented at the 1977 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, New York, April 1977 (Symposium 7.08).

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As indicated in the previous presentation, the U.S. Commissioner of Education is required by Section 151 of the Elementary and Secondary Education ACT (ESEA) to "provide such technical and other assistance as may be necessary to State educational agencies in the development and application of a systematic evaluation of programs in accordance with the models developed by the Commissioner." The Office of Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation's (OPBE's) response to this requirement of Section 151 was the establishment under contract of ten regional ESEA Title I Evaluation Technical Assistance Centers (TACs). The purpose of this paper is to explore the development, current operation and future plans for the TACs.

The Selection Process

During the spring of 1976 OPBE personnel discussed the most feasible alternatives for providing technical assistance in the evaluation of Title I programs. After considering various options such as using U.S. Office of Education (USOE) personnel or direct funding of State Education Agencies (SEAs), it was determined that outside contractors with the necessary skills would be funded through federal competitive procurement procedures. It was decided that the most efficacious method of serving all parts of the country would be to have ten competitions — a center to serve the states in each Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) regional area.

A separate competition was held for each HEW region because it was thought, and still is, that TAC project personnel should be familiar with the educational programs, personnel and mores of the regional area that they would serve. Thus, in the final Request for

Proposals (RFP), 40% of the selection points were devoted to "successful regional knowledge and experience" and 40% to applied technical skills in measurement, evaluation and statistics — staff members would not only be able to provide highly sophisticated technical consulting advice but would have the political and public relations skills necessary to be responsive to local concerns.

During the course of the screening process to select offerors with which reasonable negotiations could be conducted, the SEA Title I Director of Research (Evaluation), Committee for Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) Coordinator and other SEA personnel had been contacted in each state. Personnel from each HEW Regional Office and, in most states, local education agency (LEA) personnel also were contacted regarding the qualifications of proposed staff members. In addition, in almost all cases, an SEA representative from within the region (usually the state with the largest Title I funding) and a representative from the HEW Regional Office were present during negotiations to question offerors on their knowledge of regional progams and protocols (The state representative did not ask questions directly, but wrote questions on a piece of paper for the Government Project Officer who sometimes edited remarks or refused to ask a question. Thus, all negotiations were between Government personnel and offerors). Negotiations were conducted with at least two offerors for each region.

The presence of HEW Regional Office and SEA personnel during negotiations proved to be extremely useful because the Washington, D.C.-based selection committee did not possess an intricate knowledge of the programs and protocols of each regional area. After all negotiations

for a regional area were concluded, offerors were requested to submit their "Best and Final" offers, which were evaluated by USOE personnel. Table I lists the winning firm and project director for each region.

Table I about here

USOE's Management Philosophy Concerning TACs

During the development of the RFP for the TACs, OPBE personnel discussed alternative strategies for making the concept of a mandated evaluation system more acceptable to SEAs. The large emphasis on regional expertise in the selection criteria certainly added to the acceptability of the project by SEA personnel. Even more important, emphasizing regional expertise resulted in the selection of companies that have been able to serve the dual purpose of meeting local needs and the Section 151 mandate. In addition, it was indicated in the RFP, which is now part of each company's contract, that the TAC would be required to reach a written agreement with each of its client SEAs concerning the conditions under which it would provide services to the state and the kinds of services that would be provided. For example, each SEA and its TAC have determined jointly how LEAs and the TAC should interact and the best ways of providing services to LEAs. Some agreements have detailed special desires by states such as exploring the best ways of using already existent statewide assessment programs for the testing component of Title I evaluation. Thus, within the constraints required to be sure that a state agency would proceed in a positive manner to meet the requirements of Section 151, each state agency determined the areas of consulting services to be emphasized

by the TAC within the state.

There were several other constraints placed upon the TACs which OPBE personnel believe will aid in the implementation of Section 151. These constraints were placed upon the TACs so that they would not become involved in political controversies, be seen as Government enforcement or policy-making agencies, or be seen as trying to unsurp the roles of SEA-LEA-private contractor evaluation personnel. Therefore, center personnel are forbidden from making statements concerning USOE or SEA policies, enforcing Title I program rules, advising LEAs or SEAs on Title I program aspects, recommending a specific copyrighted achievement test, actually performing a Title I evaluation or writing a Title I evaluation report, and, of course, providing advice to LEAs or SEAs not related to Title I program evaluation.

The prime thrust of the TACs is to provide consulting services to SEAs and LEAs in the evaluation of cognitive regular-school grades two-twelve Title I programs. The majority of these services consist of helping clients to employ one of the evaluation strategies described in the previous paper or an acceptable variation or alternative. However, TAC consulting services are not limited to cognitive Title I programs because it is stated in Section 151 that "models for evaluations of all programs conducted under this title" (emphasis added) should be developed. Thus, OPBE has contracted or is in the process of contracting with firms to explore the feasibility, and if feasible develop, models in the following areas funded by Title I: non-instructional programs such as guidance and health, programs for migrant students, programs for children in institutions for the neglected or delinquent, and early

childhood (below second grade) programs. Although TAC personnel, sometimes with the help of consultants, provide high quality consulting services in these other Title I areas, clients are cautioned that what is recommended by the TAC may not match what is finally recommended or mandated by USOE. Nevertheless, TAC personnel providing services in these areas are in close contact with the federal project monitors for these developmental efforts. Providing help in Title I areas where evaluation models have not yet been fully developed exemplifies OPBE's philosophy that the TACs should be agencies which meet both federal and local needs.

The First Months of Operation

As of March 1, 1977, all but two of the 57 SEAs have signed written agreements with their TAC concerning areas of assistance. One of the remaining SEAs is conducting negotiations with its TAC and the other has agreed upon a date to begin negotiations.

The first three months of TAC services (contracts signed September 30, 1976) consisted primarily of outreach efforts to the states. Even in states which were extremely receptive to the notion of technical assistance for ESEA Title I evaluation, state personnel had to decide which office would be responsible for negotiating with the TAC, and which services the SEA wished emphasized. This often involved an introspective examination of the following areas: (1) areas of responsibility within the SEA; (2) SEA-LEA relations; (3) areas of technical expertise of SEA staff members and local school district talents; (4) the role of Title I evaluation in the overall goals of the SEA; (5) availability of funds for Title I and related programs; (6) the degree

to which changes, if any, would have to be made to meet the requirements of the new system; and others. For those SEAs whose initial reaction to federal technical assistance was somewhat less than enthusiastic, even with the SEA determining areas of service to be emphasized, reaching an agreement with the TAC often required several months.

Generally, after reaching agreement with the TAC, initial services have usually included overview workshops on the evaluation models for SEA personnel without previous exposure and/or overview workshops on one or more of the models for regional state coordinators and/or LEA evaluation personnel. In addition, the SEA contact person has often requested help in solving problems related to the implementation of one or more of the evaluation models. Two common requests have been: (1) develop a chart which shows which standardized tests are appropriate for use with the norm referenced model given specific pre-test and post-test dates (one TAC developed this chart for use by all TACs); and (2) help SEA personnel to install the computer program which analyzes data resulting from use of the models.

In those states where the initial round of workshops has been given to SEA personnel and to large groups of LEAs, LEA personnel have begun to think through questions such as: (1) which model should we use; (2) how much, if any, will have to change our Title I evaluation system to be consistent with the models and how much will this cost; (3) how much technical assistance will we need to implement a model and interpret the results; etc. This has often resulted in a group of LEAs requesting a workshop on a specific area such as the implementation of the regression model or the use of criterion referenced tests with one or more of the models. Sometimes individual districts have requested site visits to

discuss their plans and/or results in detail and, of course, SEA and LEA personnel have called the TACs with specific questions. It is expected that the number of telephone requests will increase drastically in the future.

Future Expectations

In the next few months the TACs will give additional workshops for those LEAs that will attempt to implement the USOE evaluation system in 1977-78. It is anticipated that in 1977-78 almost all states will have districts that will implement one or more of the models, or an acceptable variation or alternative. Also, there will be additional exposure for SEA personnel and, hopefully, exposure for those districts that will not attempt to implement one of the models until 1978-79 or later. It is expected that the number of on-site individual consulting trips to the SEA and to LEAs will increase as specific implementation questions are encountered. In the opinion of this writer, the major request of SEAs over the next several months will be for help in the installation of the computer program which analyzes data from the Title I models. OPBE budget planners are aware of the expected increase in demands on the TACs, and are taking the necessary actions to be sure that resources will be available.

As a concluding remark it should be noted that in this writer's opinion, the implementation of the concept of technical assistance will lead to an improved relationship between USOE and SEAs-LEAs. The notion of USOE attempting to meet its information reporting requirements to Congress while at the same time helping SEAs and LEAs with

their evaluation concerns was a concept which many SEAs were skeptical about at first. However, as additional SEA and LEA Title I evaluation personnel take advantage of this free service, it is hoped that some of the skepticism will change to enthusiasm for this different kind of federal-state-local relationship. The positive feedback that OPBE personnel have already received about the TACs leads this writer to believe that this is beginning to occur.

TABLE I

TITLE I EVALUATION
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS
PROJECT DIRECTORS

Region I

Dr. Everett W. Barnes, Jr.
RMC Research Corporation
40 Pleasant Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Region II

Dr. Gary J. Echternacht
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ 08540

Region III

Dr. Joan Troy
National Testing Service, Inc.
1905 Chapel Hill Road
Durham, NC 27705

Region IV

Dr. George Temp
Educational Testing Service - Southern Regional Office
3445 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Suite 1040
Atlanta, GA 30326

Region V

Dr. Theodore Storlie
Educational Testing Service - Midwest Regional Office
960 Grove Street
Evanston, IL 60201

Region VI

Dr. George Powell
Resource Development Institute, Inc.
1916 Justin Lane
Austin, TX 78757

Region VII

Dr. Carmen Finley
American Institutes for Research
PO Box 1113
Palo Alto, CA 94302

Region VIII, IX, X

Dr. William Wright
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
710 S.W. Second Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

USOE'S TITLE I EVALUATION MODEL

and Technical Assistance Efforts:

A State Perspective

Prepared for Presentation at

American Educational Research Association

April, 1977

By

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Daniel E. Schooley

Michigan Department of Education

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides one state's perspective of the U.S. Office of Education's efforts in developing evaluation models for ESEA Title I. It also comments on USOE'S efforts to provide states with technical assistance for implementing the proposed evaluation model. The paper is divided into the following sections; 1) The Law, 2) An Alternative Evaluation Model, 3) Equity of Testing, 4) Technical Assistance Contractors, and 5) Summary.

Michigan has been and will continue to be supporting of the efforts of Congress and USOE in improving evaluations of Title I across the country. Nationally evaluation of these programs over the past ten years has ranged from excellent to poor. The major problems seem to be: 1) the quality of data were suspect in some cases, 2) data from state to state were not comparable, 3) student achievement data sometimes were not reported, and 4) often reports were not presented to USOE on a timely schedule. Given this state of evaluation affairs and the legitimate right of the Congress, USOE, and for that matter taxpayers, leadership to develop a coordinated Title I evaluation was essential. Policy makers at national, state and local levels need to know answers to such questions as:

-- Does Title I help children learn to read?

-- Is Title I more effective at some grade levels than others?

-- Are expenditures related to achievement gains? Is there a "critical mass" of funds?

-- Are there effective instructional strategies in compensatory education?

-- Are there organizational and management strategies which are related to program success?

The evaluation system for Title I should be capable of providing answers to these questions for persons at the national, state and local levels. The local teacher and principal need detailed information for planning program improvement and instruction. The state and national evaluation models should accommodate these local data needs and minimize the local testing burden. Local educators should not have to analyze and report data necessary only for Federal purposes.

Thus, it is with these basic views, 1) the need for sound evaluation, and 2) the need for a compatible national, state and local evaluation model that this paper is written. Michigan appreciates the invitation to provide a state perspective on these important issues. Our relationship with the Office of Evaluation within the Office of Education has been excellent. They have been responsive to our concerns, and it is in this cooperative spirit that our views and suggestions are offered.

THE LAW

Congress in the Educational Amendments of 1974 (PL 93-380) included several directives to the Commissioner of Education relative to ESEA Title I Evaluation. Section 151 of the Law (full provisions are included as Attachment A) specified that the Commissioner shall:

a) ...provide for independent evaluations which describe and measure the impact of programs...

b) ...develop and publish standards...

c) ...consult with State agencies in order to provide for jointly sponsored objective evaluation studies...

d) ...provide state educational agencies models for evaluation...

e) ...provide such technical and other assistance as may be necessary to State agencies...

f) ...specify objective criteria which shall be utilized in the evaluation of all programs...

g) ...make a report to the respective committees of Congress...

h) ...develop a system for gathering and dissemination of results of evaluation...

In addition, the Commissioner was authorized to expend funds as would be necessary to carry out the above provisions.

The first two provisions of Section 151, i.e., independent evaluation and standards, are essential. Michigan would like to express full agreement with the Congress and USOE. There is a need for comparable information on Title I across the country.

The third provision, i.e., state consultation, is also essential. It is unfortunate that the consultation by USOE with the states was

neither of the quantity nor quality to give states a meaningful voice. The conditions of evaluation in the states were determined from an examination of state annual evaluation reports for 1971-74, telephone conversations, and minimal involvement of advisory groups. The USOE decision then was made to select a contractor to carry out the other provisions of Section 151, i.e., model development, data gathering, and dissemination. Greater involvement of states in the original planning would have resulted in a much different approach. The examination of evaluation plans did not provide a true picture of state conditions relative to evaluation, nor did it apparently allow for examination of a national test option. A national set of basic skills expectations, and a test based on them to measure achievement, would provide more comparable and comprehensible information to USOE and to Congress than any of the proposed models. Such a national system would seem to be less cumbersome to implement. A specific suggestion in this regard will be given later.

Further, systems which states are developing, e.g., in Michigan the state assessment program, had no opportunity to surface for consideration. Most states either now have, or are developing, basic skills assessment programs. It would seem that such programs have the potential of being utilized for Title I evaluations. If state developed educational assessments could be the basis, national-state-local cooperation could be maximized in a most efficient model. No consideration apparently was given to where state assessments could fit in to a national Title I evaluation model. Thus, once the decision was made to contract for a national model without considering state advice options were greatly limited.

Regarding the models a few comments need to be made. The models designed under the contract fulfill the requirements of Section 151, i.e., to develop models, standards, data gathering, etc. The contractors primary concern, however, seemed to be on technical matters. The system incorporates an old metric, now resurected, Normal Curve Equivalents (NCE's), as the basis for reporting test results. Let's assume for purposes of this article that NCE's are technically a more accurate and sound statistic than the usually used Grade Equivalent Units (GEU's). However, it is a fact that educators and lay-persons have a general feeling for the meaning of GEU's, whereas many will have difficulty understanding NCE's. The difficulty in understanding, will, 1) create a credibility problem, and 2) a lack of the use of the results in the decision making process.

The models require the conversion of currently used testing metrics, i.e., percentile ranks, to NCE. The first plan of the contractor was to have classroom teachers make these conversions at the time of testing. Finally, the contractor became convinced of the undue burden conversions would place on teachers. Mechanical means now have been developed to convert masses of scores centrally. All the controversy about GEU's and NCE's really boils down to what different decisions be made on the basis of NCE's if NCE's were used instead of the more commonly accepted metrics such as GEU's. It could be anticipated that the decisions would be very similar to the national level after large amounts of data were aggregated.

The models require tests be given to every pupil every year in Title I. Further, summary results are required for every project (as yet the term project has not been operationally defined at the Federal

level so that it would be consistent in all states). One wonders why all this testing is imposed by the models. Matrix sampling of pupils within each state would provide the data needed to address Federal policy questions about program success, expenditures and organization. However, the issue of project success is primarily a State and local concern, USOE is too far removed to do anything about the lack of success in a specific project...that has to be done locally; further identification of exemplary projects to serve as models...is best done by states. A better strategy to deal with lack of success might have been to provide for the development of local or regional evaluation capabilities within states. Local expertise would then be available to deal with lack of success, problem analysis, and development of alternative delivery systems. The proposed model produces achievement test scores, but does not provide for a response which will result in improved instructional programs for children. The better strategy to identify exemplary projects might have been to help states set up systems for identifying exemplary projects, for validating them, and disseminating them.

The models leave unaddressed evaluation problems often faced in Title I. Some inner city schools experience high pupil turnover during a school year. It is not uncommon to find schools where 20%, 30%, 40% or even larger proportions of the pupils are different at the end of the school year than at the beginning. Another unaddressed problem is the adequacy of the present tests for measuring the achievement of Title I children. Such issues as proper test level for the individual pupil, test bias, and relevancy of objectives tested may well influence test results much more than the major issue addressed, i.e., accuracy of GEU's.

On a more positive note, the model development has stimulated discussion about evaluation and how the quality of evaluation could be improved. Important issues in measurement are now being addressed and solutions sought. Local and State action to improve Title I evaluations and to join into a system which feeds the needed data upward has begun.

An Alternative Evaluation Model

Michigan agrees with the need and support the goals of Section 151, but the specific models are questioned. It is necessary that reliable and valid evaluation information on Compensatory Education Programs be collected for each state by the Office of Education, but the proposed models may be neither the best or most efficient models for these purposes.

The goals of Section 151 appear to be two-fold; 1) develop and use reliable and valid instruments to measure the basic skills achievement levels of students receiving the benefits of compensatory education, and 2) provide timely and comparable data related to successful compensatory education programs. Interwoven into the second goal is the need for the data to be useful for decision-makers so that they can make programmatic changes on a timely basis.

It would seem that a good evaluation system provides not only summative information, but also formative information. The current Office of Education models do provide technically sound summative evaluation information. However, these models do not take into account the fact that teachers and administrators need data on a more regular basis than once or twice a year. A formative evaluation system can provide useable, instructional information to the classroom teacher on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The best evaluation model would provide both summative and formative information within the rubric of one generalizible evaluation model.

Given the current state of the art in testing and evaluation, we have proposed a potentially more useful evaluation model that includes the formative and summative evaluation needs of local as well as state and federal agencies. The vehicle for accomplishing this evaluation

system is the ongoing Michigan Educational Assessment Test. These tests are objective-referenced. Objective-referenced, as we use it, means a set of minimal objectives in reading and mathematics were developed by citizens, educators and administrators. These items to measure these basic skills objectives were produced and refined so that they are reliable and valid measures of the objectives.

The State Assessment tests are given on an annualy basis at Grades 4, 7, and 10. Thus, they produce summative information for these "benchmark" years in the state's educational process. Since these data provide information on an objective-by-objective basis the results can also be the basis for formative evaluation. For example, once the Michigan Education Assessement tests have been given at the beginning of Grade 4, instruction can begin on the objectives that have not been mastered by the student. Thus, the teacher will have available a continuous monitoring system for a test-teach-test instructional system. If the instruction has been successful, the child's scores on the 7th grade education assessment test should be noticeably improved. Rather elegant "tracking" to match children with their results from Grade 4 to Grade 7 are required. However, once the tracking is accomplished, the measurement is on the same set of objectives, and the scores of the same children are used to determine progress.

The system briefly outlined above provides summative information for State and Federal use and serves as "benchmark" information for teachers and parents. Since the proposed evaluation system is objective-referenced and indicates mastery, local districts can easily add their own locally developed objective based instructional and testing systems to supplement the state objectives. Thus, the system would provide

formative information useful for teachers in the instruction of children between the testing years, and would be locally relevant and useful, rather than, providing a data useful only to pass on to the state or Federal agencies.

Equity of Testing

This concept is being liberally generalized from a paper by Stanley A. Rumbaugh in which he considers the problems involved in insuring the equity of finances across differing needs of educational agencies (Rumbaugh, 1977). The concept as it will be applied in this paper will be to develop an evaluation system at the national level which will maximize the policy uses of the data, minimize the testing and interpretation burden on local and state agencies and finally, provide local educational agencies with the ability to go beyond the minimums and adopt the system to meet their local evaluation needs.

Perhaps the best vehicle for providing such an evaluation model would be the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). If the needs of Congress are to have timely data for decision-making on the general effectiveness of compensatory education programs, there is no need for the currently proposed testing at every grade level for every student during every year. Instead, the conceptualization underlying NAEP could be utilized, i.e., objectives, students, and grades could be sampled on a common core of minimal performance objectives in reading and mathematics. NAEP would only have to change its current data collection configurations to the extent that its sampling plan would insure the gathering of meaningful data on a state-by-state basis. NAEP would also have to change its identification system so that it could be sure that the children being sampled were receiving compensatory education services. This system would provide state level data of high quality and the data would be collected directly from students on achievement of the basic skills. These data would be collected at minimal effort and

expense to the state and local educational agency involved. It also has the advantage that if a state wished to collect data for each compensatory education project, it could "piggy back" on the efforts of NAEP using NAEP's common core of objectives supplemented by others from local and state educational agencies.

Technical Assistance Contractors

Section 151(e) suggests that the Commissioner should provide "technical and other assistance as may be necessary to state educational agencies to enable them to assist local educational agencies in the development and application of systematic evaluation of programs in accordance with the models..." This is an excellent feature of the law. USOE through the support of technical support contractors has provided a very valuable assistance to states. Not valuable because the proposed model can be installed, but valuable in developing state and local skills in evaluation.

Michigan attended a regional meeting conducted by the contractor responsible for the development of the proposed evaluation models. At this regional meeting, states had the opportunity not only to learn about the models, but also to meet with their assigned technical support contractor. In Michigan's case this is Educational Testing Service, Evanston Office.

Michigan has met with representatives of ETS both at the regional meeting and at our state offices. ETS and the USOE Project Director have displayed a breadth and depth of political and technical knowledge and have been most helpful. In conjunction with ETS, goals and procedures have been established for working relationships and work is beginning with local educational agencies. Hopefully such technical assistance is not a one year or short term commitment.

The field tests of the models, now going on in some states, may make valuable contributions. Some critical operational problems will be identified, and addressed. Thus, the field tests do have the potential for moving the state of evaluation further ahead. USOE is commended on these efforts to assist states.

Summary

Michigan -- would welcome the opportunity to work with the USOE to design and implement a comprehensive evaluation system. A system which would provide Congress and USOE the 1) information needed as a basis for resource allocation and other policy decisions; 2) information needed to properly administer the programs; 3) leadership for program improvement; and 4) information needed to improve delivery of services, curricula, and most importantly the instruction provided pupils. Emerging and existing criterion and norm-referenced assessment--local, state and national--are logical bases for such a system. Only leadership, resources, and coordination are needed. The system could conceivably reduce present testing burdens, rather than increase them, but certainly the Federal-state-local partnership would result in a more common commitment to good evaluation, program improvement, better instruction and basic skills mastery for children.

Program Evaluation

Sec. 151. (a) The Commissioner shall provide for independent evaluations which describe and measure the impact of programs and projects assisted under this title. Such evaluations may be provided by contract or other arrangements, and all such evaluations shall be made by competent and independent persons, and shall include, whenever possible, opinions obtained from program or project participants about the strengths and weaknesses of such programs or projects.

(b) The Commissioner shall develop and publish standards for evaluation of program or project effectiveness in achieving the objectives of this title.

(c) The Commissioner shall, where appropriate, consult with State agencies in order to provide for jointly sponsored objective evaluation studies of programs and projects assisted under this title within a State.

(d) The Commissioner shall provide to State educational agencies models for evaluations of all programs conducted under this title for their use in carrying out their functions under section 143(a), which shall include uniform procedures and criteria to be utilized by local educational agencies, as well as by the State agency in the evaluation of such programs.

(e) The Commissioner shall provide such technical and other assistance as may be necessary to State educational agencies to enable them to assist local educational agencies in the development and application of a systematic evaluation of programs in accordance with the models developed by the Commissioner.

(f) The models developed by the Commissioner shall specify objective criteria which shall be utilized in the evaluation of all programs and shall outline techniques (such as longitudinal studies of children involved in such programs) and methodology (such as the use of tests which yield comparable results) for producing data which are comparable on a statewide and nationwide basis.

(g) The Commissioner shall make a report to the respective committees of the Congress having legislative jurisdiction over programs authorized by this title and the respective Committees on Appropriations concerning his progress in carrying out this section not later than January 31, 1975, and thereafter he shall report to such committees no later than January 31 of each calendar year the results of the evaluations of programs and projects required under this section, which shall be comprehensive and detailed, as up-to-date as possible, and based to the maximum extent possible on objective measurements, together with any other related finding and evaluations and his recommendations with respect to legislation.

(h) The Commissioner shall also develop a system for the gathering and dissemination of results of evaluations and for the identification of exemplary programs and projects, or of particularly effective elements of programs and projects, and for the dissemination of information concerning such programs and projects or such elements thereof to State and local educational agencies responsible for the design and conduct of programs and projects under this title, and to the education profession and the general public.

(i) The Commissioner is authorized, out of funds appropriated to carry out this title in any fiscal year, to expend such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, but not to exceed one-half of 1 per centum of the amount appropriated for such program, of which $5,000,000 for each fiscal year ending prior to July 1, 1977, shall be available only for the surveys and studies authorized by section 821 of the Education Amendments of 1974.

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USOE'S TITLE I EVALUATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS-- REACTIONS FROM AN LEA

Carl Novak, Lincoln (Neb.) Public Schools

Although the focus of this paper is the impact of the USOEs Technical Assistance effort on LEAs, I would first like to comment on the LEA/ federal partnership in evaluation.

The evaluation provisions of ESEA in general, and Title I in particular, have had a tremendous impact on the educational community. The origin of the evaluation unit in the Lincoln, Nebraska public schools can be traced to federal programs; a heritage common to most (public school) evaluation units. In many districts Title I is still the only program that is systematically evaluated on a regular basis.

The potential of evaluation has not, however, been fully realized. Evaluation has not had much visible impact on Title I policy at either the federal, state or local level. The reasons for this apparent impotency are legion. They include (1) the poor scientific quality of most evaluations, (2) the lack of relevance of many evaluations to the concerns of decision makers, (3) the political nature of most educational decisions, (4) the poor timing of many reports and (5) a general lack of trust of evaluation by administrators. The USOE Technical Assistance effort is at least a partial answer to some of these concerns.

Reactions of an LEA. The Lincoln, Nebraska public schools have an enrollment of approximately 27,000 students. The district is supported by an evaluation team that includes one planning and four evaluation specialists. The evaluation team is responsible for evaluating both federal and district programs and for providing technical support to central office and building staff. Like most evaluation units, we are

involved in more projects than we should be and seemingly are always under time deadlines of some kind or other. Therefore little time and few resources are available for research and development activities and all assistance is welcomed. The USOE has focused on problems that we have neither the time more resources to solve ourselves.

One example of a problem confronting our evaluation team that was solved through the technical assistance effort provided by USOE involved the reporting of test scores. It is an evaluation team policy to use, to as great as extent as possible, test data collected either through the district test program or through normal data collection activities in the building. Most of the Title I test data is collected as part of the normal district testing program. Although dissatisfied with scores reported, we were unable to change the scores without changing the district reporting procedures. Largely on advice from the evaluation team the district was moving away from grade equivalency test scores. Title I was, in fact, the last bastion of grade equivalency reporting. As long as grade equivalency scores were required by the State Title I office, they could not be eliminated from the standard district reports and as long as they were included in the district report, teachers and administrators were using them.

The evaluation team was given the charge of recommending a suitable standard score to replace grade equivalencies. Because we lacked the resources (particularly time) to study the issues indepth we were unable to arrive at a score satisfactory to all members of the team.

The Normal Curve Equivalency scores, developed as part of the Technical Assistance effort, proved to be a suitable replacement for

grade equivalency scores. The State Title I reporting requirement will be changed, thereby allowing Lincoln to completely eliminate grade equivalency scores from the district reports. A position paper has been developed recommending that Normal Curve Equivalencies be adopted for reporting district scores. The recommendation was accepted, and the only issue still in doubt appears to be the time line. There is some question as to whether or not it is practical to use Normal Curve Equivalency Scores to report scores yet this spring.

Normal Curve Equivalencies have already been adopted by the evaluation team and have been used in several district (non-federal) evaluation projects.

The use of Normal Curve Equivalencies has also provided an interesting perspective of previous Title I evaluation findings. The 1975-76 Title I data was reanalyzed using Normal Curve Equivalency scores and the results were compared with the grade equivalency score results.

Comparisons of the gains made on each of the scales focused attention on one major discrepancy. The gains made by students in the lower elementary grades was historically smaller than the gains made in the upper elementary grades. Correspondingly the gains made by students in the upper elementary grades were smaller than the gains made in the junior high schools. Although this pattern contradicted the professional opinions of both principals and Title I staff (they felt that Title I was more effective in the lower elementary grades), it was consistent over a four year period.

When gains were computed in Normal Curve Equivalencies, a much different pattern emerged. The gains made by students in the lower

elementary grades were larger than the gains made by students in the upper elementary grades. Unfortunately Normal Curve Equivalencies were not available at the junior high level.

Each year this relationship between lower elementary, upper elementary and junior high school students has been discussed by administrators and teachers. Each year the evaluators pointed out that although the junior high students made larger grade equivalency gains they still were farther behind than their younger counterparts. Each year the administrators and teachers reluctantly accepted the explanations but remained skeptical; particularly, since the evaluation results contradicted their professional judgements (larger gains at the junior high than in elementary schools). It is no wonder why evaluation results tend not to be used.

The development and popularization of Normal Curve Equivalency is only one example of local use made of the Technical Assistance effort. The Technical Assistance effort has also provided a perspective for reviewing district and evaluation test programs. For example, Lincoln's testing dates, in some cases, do not correspond to the dates during which the empirical normative data was collected. Although we haven't yet decided exactly what to do about these minor discrepancies, we are at least aware of the problem.

The Technical Assistance effort has also resulted in procedures which will enable the evaluation team to use criterion referenced or locally constructed tests instead of relying only on standardized test. It is very likely that these procedures will be implemented in Lincoln in the near future.

We are also hoping that additional assistance will be forthcoming to help us with some of the problems that remain unsolved. One example of such a problem is the development of evaluation procedures based on multiple matrix sampling.

The impact of Technical Assistance effort is not, however, limited to technical issues and problems. It has the potential for helping develop and implement evaluation strategies for troublesome topics.

For example during the 1974-75 school year our evaluation team was responsible for evaluating a federally funded Bilingual projects. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet this responsibility very well. We simply were not familiar enough with the issues and special problems associated with the evaluation of Bilingual programs and it was not to our best advantage to spend too much time on the Bilingual evaluation. We haven't been involved in one since nor are we likely to be in the foreseeable future. The Bilingual evaluation is an example of a situation in which it would have been very helpful to have a set of basic evaluation procedures and/or guidelines available.

Although I already indicated that it is unlikely that we will be involved in another Bilingual program, we are responsible for evaluating Special Education and Early Childhood Education programs. Historically, we haven't evaluated these programs very well. Technical Assistance effort is developing guidelines for the evaluation of both programs. Quite frankly, we need help evaluating these programs and are looking to publication of guidelines and recommendations regarding these types of programs.

The availability of a set of evaluation guidelines is, however, a double edged sword. To be useful the guidelines should be (a) technically sound and (b) flexible. Few things are more discouraging to an LEA evaluator than to be saddled with evaluation procedures that are technically deficient or obviously unappropriate. In such cases, we would like to reserve the right to make our own mistakes. We would also like the recommended procedures to be flexible to make allowances for local contingencies (no model is so perfect it cannot be improved upon in a specific setting.)

If the Bilingual evaluation model would have been available in 1974, we would have used it as the starting point. It would, undoubtably, have been more satisfactory than what we eventually did.

In addition to helping LEAs resolve technical problems and providing technical sound, hopefully appropriate, evaluation strategies, there are two other potential benefits associated with the Technical Assistance effort. The two potential benefits are (1) increased emphasis on evaluation and (2) increased evaluation capabilities within State Departments of Education.

A strong State Department evaluation capability is advantageous to LEAs since State Departments generally define, through the publication of guidelines and regulations, the lowest acceptable level of evaluation functioning in LEA. State Departments are, however, faced with the unenviable task of trying to find an acceptable compromise between the sophisticated and the progmatic. Generally speaking, the more sophisticated the procedures recommended by the State Department, the less practical the procedures are to implement. Conversely, the

more practical the procedures, the less sophisticated and therefore, the less powerful. The Technical Assistance efforts of USOE have developed a potentially workable compromise to the dilemma, at least in Title I.

The impact of the Technical Assistance efforts in Nebraska will more than likely be the substantial improvement of the Nebraska Title I evaluation system. This, in effect, will have a positive impact on Lincoln since the type of evaluation we are trying to provide will be more consistent with state expectations.

The second potential benefit is an increased understanding of and appreciation for evaluation. One of the outcomes of the Technical Assistance effort has been a massive inservice program in evaluation. Participation in the inservice will not be limited to evaluators. Inservice has been and will continue to be provided to Title I administrators and State Department officials. Hopefully, these inservice sessions and the improved quality of evaluation will result in increased support for and more effective use of evaluation.

Conclusion. The probable impact of the Technical Assistance effort on LEA is very likely to be a positive one. The support received has already helped Lincoln overcome some of the evaluation problems that the district could not have resolved without help. The recommended evaluation procedures for Title I evaluation were implementable and resulted in intuitively more meaningful conclusions. Other major benefits include stronger State Department of Education evaluation efforts and more emphasis on evaluation. Indirectly both of these will help LEA evaluation efforts.

There have been other federally sponsored efforts to, either directly or indirectly, improve the quality of local evaluation. Examples include the AIR Reporting Guide, the Validation Guide, Belmont Task Force, etc. However, the Technical Asssistance effort is the most comprehensive and meaningful effort yet.

While I am appreciative of the help provided by the USOE Technical Assistance efforts, I do not advocate abrogation of local responsibility for evaluation. I would be the first to admit LEAs at times need help, however, we do not need mandated evaluation systems that infringe upon local discretion. I do not believe in the existence of evaluator proof evaluation procedures any more than I believe in teacher proof, instructional programs. What we are interested in is help in resolving the technical and practical problems that we are unable to resolve by ourselves. Hopefully the Technical Assistance efforts are a positive step towards a productive Federal, State and Local partnership in the evaluation of compensatory education programs.